

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road King of Prussia, PA 19401
Phone: 610/337-5330 Fax: 610/337-5241
Internet: dps@nrc.gov or nas@nrc.gov

I-97-30

March 25, 1997

Contact: Diane Screnci
Neil A. Sheehan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC PROPOSES \$2,750 CIVIL PENALTY FOR N.J. MEDICAL FACILITY
FOR SEVERAL RADIATION SAFETY PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$2,750 fine for a New Jersey medical facility for six alleged violations of agency requirements relating to radiation safety program deficiencies. NRC staff identified the violations at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, in Paterson, N.J., during inspections conducted from January 13 to 15 and on January 30.

Among the violations found at St. Joseph's were the following failures: to provide, through the radiation safety officer, the required oversight of the radiation safety program; to conduct required weekly surveys of the radioactive waste storage area; to perform the required iodine-131 air concentration surveys of the therapy suite; to monitor the iodine-131 air concentration in the radioactive waste storage area; of the radiation safety officer to sign records of leakage tests; and of the radiation safety officer to sign records of the quarterly inventories of sealed sources.

Holders of NRC radioactive materials licenses are required to appoint a radiation safety officer (RSO) who is responsible for the implementation of a radiation safety program.

NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller said the violations indicate "a significant lack of attention by the RSO and the Radiation Safety Committee to licensed activities. In fact, the majority of the violations that occurred were the direct responsibility of the RSO. Management attention to the radiation safety program is warranted to ensure that licensed activities are conducted safely and in accordance with requirements."

"While the violations in question did not have an impact on the health and safety of the public, patients or your staff," Mr. Miller continued, "such violations are potential precursors to more serious problems, and therefore, it is important that the RSO and the Radiation Safety Committee actively look for, identify and correct such problems. This did not occur at your facility."

St. Joseph's has 30 days to pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that all or part of the penalty be withdrawn.

#